THE MYSTERY OF THE INN BY THE SHORE

BY Florence Warden,
Author of "The House on the Marsh," etc.

CHAPTER XIX.

Continued.

"Miss Bostal takes her part? I did not think the dried-up little creature had it in her!" said Clifford, with admiration. "I shall go and see her."

"That is just what she wants you to do," replied Miss Lansdowne. "She has said so to me so often that I thought, when I saw I had a chance of speaking to you, I would not let it slip."

"It is very good of you," said Clifford. "Which was the dance you said I might have?"

The next morning, before luncheon-time, he was at Stroan.

It was a bright day, and there was only just enough wind to stir the air pleasantly on his way across the marsh road. The sun shone on the white, chalky soil, and the place where the body of Jem Stickles had been found was now no longer distinguishable by any outward sign from the rest of the grass-grown border to the road. People had begun to forget the tragedy, and even the fresh interest excited by the more recent events at the Blue Lion had by this time faded in their minds, relegated to the background by the pressure of some less stirring but newer occurrence.

The Blue Lion itself looked melancholy enough, having been uninhabited for a month. With its doors closed, its shutters barred, with broken panes in its upper windows, it was a dreary contrast to the little inn he had known. No market-carts now drew up before the door; the ducks and the chickens no longer wandered about the road; the shed where the cart had stood was empty and already out of repair. Clifford, after one walk around into the little garden and down to the shed where he had first met Nell, hurried away from the desolate spot and made haste to reach Shingle End.

But a change had come over this place also. To begin with, the storms of the winter had dealt harshly with the old house. Some slates had been carried away and had not been replaced, and a tree, blown down by a southwesterly gale, now blocked the little bit of ground which formed the front garden. It had injured the corner of the house in its fall, had carried away one of the outside shutters of the drawing-room front window and smashed half a dozen of the small panes of glass, which had been left broken. Sheets of brown paper had been pasted on the inner side of the window, completing the desolate appearance of the old house. Clifford, as he approached the gate, found that the tree had fallen in such a manner that it was impossible to get in. Looking up doubtfully at the windows, he caught sight of a little, withered face, gray, haunting, peering out at him from behind the meager muslin curtain.

Was it or was it not Miss Bostal's? For a moment he stood undecided with his hand upon the gate. Had some terrible calamity—the death of the Colonel, the illness of his daughter—fallen upon the place like a blight? Should he go back and make inquiries at the nearest cottage before he ventured to intrude upon what might be some great grief?

There was an ancient cottage close by which had once been a toll-house. He thought he would knock at the door and try to find out something, and was retreating for that purpose, when a hurried tapping on the glass of the upper window made him look round again. Miss Bostal—if it was indeed she—made a sign to him to go round to the back of the house.

Obeying her mute direction, he found his way back to the little side-gate in the paling, passed through into the garden and presented himself at the back door. He noticed with surprise, as he passed the two lower windows, the one at the side and the other at the back of the house, that the blinds were drawn down. Surely, then, the Colonel was dead, he thought. He had not time to speculate as to why, in that case, the upper front rooms had had their blinds up, when he heard the sound of some one within drawin back a bolt and then another and another.

Then the door was opened by Miss Bostal, who put out her head to throw one frightened glance round the garden, and then, seizing his proffered hand, drew him hastily inside, and began immediately to replace the bolts.

Clifford could not help feeling amused, although he took care not to show it. It seemed to him clear that the recent occurrences in the neighborhood had got on the poor little woman's brain, and made her absurdly nervous about the safety of her own little person and not very valuable property.

"You are well secured against burglars, I see," said he, as he insisted upon doing the work of bolting the door for her, and was surprised to find how solid and strong the protection was.

The little woman started, almost jumped.

"Oh, Mr. King!" gasped she, in a tone of acute terror. "Don't make jokes about it. It's too dreadful! I never feel safe! Last night— Oh!" she paused, closing her eyes as if on the point of fainting. And Clifford saw, by the light that came through the dusty panes above the front and the back door, that her little pinched face had grown livid at some terrible thought.

"Well, what happened last night—Oh?" said Clifford, speaking in as cheerful a tone as he could, in the hope of soothing her nerves. But instead of answering at once, little Miss Bostal, suddenly opening again her faded light eyes and staring at him with solemn intentness, led him to the door of the drawing-room, which she unlocked and threw open with a tragic gesture.

"Look in there!" whispered she.

Clifford obeyed, and say nothing whatever; for it was dark. When, after a few minutes spent in rather uncanny silence on the part of the lady, his eyes got used to the gloom, he saw that the windows had been barricaded from the inside in the most thorough and ingenious manner with furniture and with planks nailed across from side to side.

"Why," said he, in astonishment, "you seem to be preparing to stand a siege."

He had already made up his mind that the eccentric little lady had gone out of her mind.

"We are besieged," she whispered, with a look which confirmed Clifford's hypothesis. "I can see that you don't believe me, that you think it is only my fancy. But ask my father."

And before Clifford could make any answer, she had quickly crossed the stone-flagged passage, had thrown open the door of the dining-room and with a gesture invited Clifford to enter.

As the young man did so, rather fearing what sort of conversation he should have to hold with her, he was much relieved to find that the Colonel was there, sitting by the fire, with his spectacles on, reading a weekly paper. But to Clifford's astonishment and alarm, the change in the old man was as great as in his daughter.

Colonel Bostal, although his clothes were always shabby and old-fashioned, had always retained an air of soldierly trimness, had always kept his hair closely cut and his snow-white mustache well trimmed, so that he had borne a certain air of smartness and distinction. Now he had lost every trace of it. His shoulders were bent. His hair had been allowed to grow long. His mustache hung ragged and untrimmed over a rough and straggling beard. More than this, there was in his eyes a look as pitiful in its restlessness as the haunting expression which Clifford had noticed in Miss Theodora's.

The old man started when he saw the visitor, rose and held out his hand with mechanical, old-fashioned courtesy; but it was doubtful whether he recognized him.

Miss Bostal went softly round his chair with her quick, bird-like little steps, and put her hand gently on his shoulder.

"Dear papa," she said in a whisper, "don't you remember Mr. King? He was here in the summer. You do remember, don't you?"

"Oh, yes, certainly I do; of course I do, Theodora," responded the Colonel, with a slight frown at the implication that he was losing his memory. "Sit down, Mr. King, and tell us what the great world is doing."

Then Clifford saw that in a moment the old man had become quite himself, and it was the weight of some care which had given him his changed appearance. The young man was sorry when Miss Theodora at once recalled her father to the anxiety which was pressing upon both of them.

"I want you to tell Mr. King, papa," she said, as Clifford took the chair offered him, "about the terrible persecution we have been subjected to lately since the Blue Lion has been shut up."

"It's not a very lively subject," objected her father, whose face fell at his daughter's words. "However, I will tell you, if the story is worth telling."

Clifford, although he was indeed curious to hear the narrative, protested that he did not wish to do so, as he saw that his host was by no means anxious to relate it. But Miss Theodora insisted.

"Well, then," said the old gentleman, "it is simply this: At least half a dozen times since the Blue Lion has been deserted we have been annoyed by knocks and blows on our doors and windows at night. And although we have done our best to find out who it is that annoys us in this manner, we have been unable to do so."

"And have you no idea, no suspicion?"

The Colonel shook his head in a troubled and anxious manner, but Miss Theodora pursed her lips and looked shrewd.

"I have a theory," she said. And she waited to be asked what her theory was.

Clifford expressed the wished-for curiosity.

"I believe," she went on, with conviction, "that it is the person who has been at the bottom of the mysteries we have been suffering here lately."

"Nonsense, my dear," interrupted her father, quickly, and not without nervousness. "What on earth should such a person want with us? We have nothing in the house worth stealing; and if we had, do you suppose that the person who was so very skillful in getting away and in evading justice, would try to batter our doors in? You are talking nonsense, Theodora."

But Theodora looked stubborn. Then Clifford made a suggestion.

"If you think that, why don't you inform the police? They would lay an ambush for this person, and would certainly free you from the annoyance of his visits, in any case."

To the young man's surprise Colonel Bostal's face assumed an expression of alarm which he tried in vain to hide; but Miss Theodora broke in triumphantly:

"That is just what I tell him, Mr. King, but he won't hear of it. Perhaps you will be better able to persuade him than I."

The Colonel, for answer, leaned back in his chair and drew his daughter's little thin hands round his shoulders.

"I always think," he said, after a long silence, during which strange suspicions rushed through Clifford's mind, "that it is better not to stir up scandals that are past and done with. I may have my own suspicions that the annoyance we suffer from is connected with the uncanny stories we have heard so much about. But still I will not interfere, and I refuse to call in the aid of the police. We must not forget that in delivering up this unknown person who annoys us, we might be exposing others to danger."

"What others, papa?" asked Miss Theodora quickly.

But the Colonel would not answer. He turned the conversation to another subject, and the interesting topic was not again touched upon until Clifford, having taken leave of the Colonel, stood in the hall with Miss Theodora.

"Do you know why I came down here to-day?" he then asked.

"Not to see us?" asked Miss Theodora. "We could hardly have hoped for that."

"It was to see you and to thank you for your trust in Nell. I met Miss Lansdowne in town one evening, and she told me you were the one person who still believed in her innocence."

But, to his chagrin, the little lady sighed and looked down. At last she said:

"I did hold out as long as I could against the thought of her guilt, Mr. King; but I must confess that I, too, have had to give way to overwhelming evidence. In face of some fresh circumstances which have now come to my knowledge, I don't see how I can escape the conclusion that she did commit these crimes."

Clifford drew himself up with a great shock of disappointment. Here, where he expected a fortress, he found a quagmire.

"In fact, it is because my father feels sure that the person who comes here to annoy us is the very same creature who instigated the girl to commit these crimes, that he refuses to give information to the police."

"And who is the person?" asked Clifford, quickly.

"A young man who has obtained a great influence over her, and who has probably by this time become her husband," replied Miss Bostal.

Clifford could not repress a movement of anxiety at these words. Miss Bostal tried to persuade him to come back into the dining-room, with her and to stay to tea. But he excused himself and, with a rather colder leave-taking than he had expected, he left the house by the back door, and heard Miss Theodora draw the bolts before he reached the end of the garden.

This visit had left an extraordinary impression upon him.

There had flashed through his mind, as he noted the effect which Theodora's prattle made upon her father, an uneasy suspicion whether the Colonel himself was not in some way implicated in the murder of Jem Stickels and the robberies at the Blue Lion. It was quite clear that poor Miss Theodore had no inkling of this, for she chattered away without even noticing her father's uneasiness. It was in vain, however, that Clifford tried to imagine any series of circumstances by which the old Colonel could have been implicated in the crimes. On the other hand, they remained just as inexplicable at the hands of any other person.

It was with a great sinking of the heart that Clifford began to feel his own belief in Nell's complete innocence giving way. He was forced again to take refuge in the belief that if she had been an agent in these criminal acts, she had been an unconscious one. And the thought which was uppermost in his mind was: What steps should he take to find her? The feeling which was strongest in his heart was the desire to shelter her from the consequences of those acts.

But the question was: How to find her? Clifford had been down to Stroan already to make inquiries, but had been unable to obtain any tidings of the uncle or the niece more definite than the vague rumor that George Claris was "shut up somewhere."

Clifford paused for a few moments outside the garden gate of Shingle End, wondering whether he would apply for information to the police at Stroan. It was a step he dreaded to take, although he began to think it was the only one likely to lead to his obtaining the details he wanted.

As he stood looking vaguely along the road he suddenly perceived an old woman, who was standing at the door of the ancient turnpike cottage, was blinking and nodding at him in a mysterious manner. He took a few steps in her direction, and she came out in the road to meet him.

To be Continued.

Scarcely a Good Pleader.

A well-known lawyer was called on recently by a woman who was anxious to secure his legal advice and his interest in her case. She explained with tears the circumstances and begged him for advice.

"I hope," she sobbed, "that you will not refuse my case. I am so eager to have you for my lawyer, for I believe you can pull me through. Some one told me you would not take the case, but tell me that you will."

The lawyer was touched.

"Madame," he replied kindly, "you have my sympathy. Certainly I will take your case, for, you know, everybody who knows me is aware of one thing, and that is that I am always for the under dog in the fight."

He meant well and kindly, but we must admit that his language was not felicitous.—Louisville (Ky.) Times.

Bears and Beavers in France.

Bears are still found in France, their chief haunt being the primeval forest of Combe d'Ire, Lake Annecy, in the Alps. Summer tourists in that forest never see them, because they are then high up the mountains, and only come down from them when the snows cover the wild fruits on which they feast. Another of their haunts is the forest of Doussard. From 1867 to 1893 only nine were killed. The French bear is very large and powerful, with a reddish-grey fur, which is valuable as a rug. To the list of fur-bearing animals in France must be added the beaver of the Rhone. Very few of them are left, but steps have been taken to preserve them from extinction, and even exploit them for their pelts.—Cassell's Magazine.

It doesn't take an X-ray apparatus to see through some people.

DR. TALMAGE'S SERM[ON]

SUNDAY'S DISCOURSE BY THE NOTED DIVINE.

Subject: Lessons Taught by the Nativity—On That Christmas Night God Honored Motherhood—A Tribute to Science—Most Famous Night in History.

WASHINGTON, D. C.—The discourse of Dr. Talmage is full of the nativity and appropriate for the holidays; text, Luke ii, 16, "And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the babe lying in a manger."

The black window shutters of a December night were thrown open, and some of the best singers of a world where they all sing stood there and, putting back the drapery of a cloud, chanted a peace anthem until all the echoes of hill and valley applauded and encored the halleluiah chorus. Come, let us go into that Christmas scene as though we had never before worshiped at the manger. Here is a Madonna worth looking at. I wonder not that the most frequent name in all lands and in all Christian countries is Mary. And there are Marys in palaces and Marys in cabins, and, though German and French and Italian and Spanish and English pronounce it differently, they are all namesakes of the one whom we find on a bed of straw, with her pale face against the soft cheek of Christ in the night of the nativity. All the great painters have tried, on canvas, to present Mary and her child and the incidents of that most famous night in the world's history. Raphael, in three different masterpieces, celebrated them. Tintoretto and Ghirlandajo surpassed themselves in the adoration of the Magi. Correggio needed to do no more than his Madonna to become immortal. The "Madonna of the Lily," by Leonardo da Vinci, will kindle the admiration of all ages. But all the galleries of Dresden are forgotten when I think of the small room of that gallery containing the "Sistine Madonna." Yet all of them were copies of St. Matthew's Madonna and Luke's Madonna, the inspired Madonna of the old book which we had put into our hands when we were infants, and that we hope to have under our heads when we die.

Behold, in the first place, that on the first night of Christ's life God honored the brute creation. You cannot get into that Bethlehem barn without going past the camels, the mules, the dogs, the oxen. The brutes of that stable heard the first cry of the infant Lord. Some of the old painters represent the oxen and camels kneeling that night before the new-born babe. And well might they kneel! Have you ever thought that Christ came, among other things, to alleviate the sufferings of the brute creation? Was it not appropriate that He should, during the first few days and nights of His life on earth, be surrounded by the dumb beasts, whose moan and plaint and bellowing have for ages been a prayer to God for the arresting of their tortures and the righting of their wrongs? Not a kennel in all the centuries, not a bird's nest, not a worn-out horse on tow-path, not a herd freezing in the poorly built cow-pen, not a freight car in summer time bringing the beeves to market without water through a thousand miles of agony, not a surgeon's witnessing the struggles of fox or rabbit or pigeon or dog in the horrors of vivisection but has an interest in the fact that Christ was born in a stable surrounded by brutes.

Standing then, as I imagine now I do, in that Bethlehem night, with an infant Christ on the one side and the speechless creatures of God on the other, I cry: Look out how you strike the rowel into that horse's side; take off that curbed bit from that bleeding mouth; remove that saddle from that raw back; shoot not for fun that bird that is too small for food; forget not to put water into the cage of that canary; throw out some crumbs to those birds caught too far north in the winter's inclemency; arrest that man who is making that one horse draw a load heavy enough for three; rush in upon that scene where boys are torturing a cat or transfixing butterfly and grasshopper; drive not off that old robin, for her nest is a mother's cradle and under her wing there may be three or four musicians of the sky in training. In your families and in your schools teach the coming generation more mercy than the present generation has ever shown, and in this marvelous Bible picture of the nativity, while you point out to them the angel, show them also the camel, and while they hear the celestial chant let them also hear the cow's moan.

Behold also in this Bible scene how on that Christmas night God honored childhood. Childhood was to be honored by that advent. He must have a child's light limbs and a child's dimpled hand and a child's beaming eye and a child's flaxen hair, and babyhood was to be honored for all time to come, and a cradle was to mean more than a grave. Mighty God! May the reflection of that one child's face be seen in all infantile faces!

Enough have all those fathers and mothers on hand if they have a child in the house. A throne, a crown, a scepter, a kingdom, under charge. Be careful how you strike him across the head, jarring the brain. What you say to him will be centennial and a thousand years will not stop the echo and re-echo. Do not say, "It is only a child." Rather say, "It is only an immortal." It is only a masterpiece of Jehovah. It is only a being that shall outlive sun and moon and star and ages quadriennial. God has infinite resources, and He can give presents of great value, but when He wants to give the richest possible gift to a household He looks around all the worlds and all the universe and then gives a child. Yea, in all ages God has honored childhood. He makes almost every picture a failure unless there be a child either playing on the floor or looking through the window or seated on the lap gazing into the face of the mother.

It was a child in Naaman's kitchen that told the great Syrian warrior where he might go and get cured of the leprosy which at his seventh plunge in the Jordan was left at the bottom of the river. It was to the cradle of leaves in which a child was lain, rocked by the Nile, that God called the attention of history. It was a sick child that evoked Christ's curative sympathies. It was a child that Christ set in the midst of the squabbling disciples to teach the lesson of humility. A child decided Waterloo, showing the army of Blucher how it could take a short cut through the fields when, if the old road had been followed, the Prussian general would have come up too late to save the destinies of Europe. It was a child that decided Gettysburg, he having overheard two Confederate generals in a conversation in which they decided to march for Gettysburg instead of Harrisburg, and, this reported to Governor Curtin, the Federal forces started to meet their opponents at Gettysburg. And to-day the child is to decide all the great battles, make all the laws, settle all the destinies and usher in the world's salvation or destruction. Men, women, nations, all earth and all heaven, behold the child!

Notice also that in this Bible night scene God honored science. Who are the three wise men kneeling before the Divine Infant? Not boors, not ignoramuses, but Caspar, Bathasar and Melchior, men who knew all that was to be known. They were the Isaac Newtons and Herschels and Faradays of their time. Their alchemy was the forerunner of our sublime chemistry, their astrology the mother of our magnificent astronomy, and when I see these scientists bowing before the beautiful babe I see the prophecy of the time when all the telescopes and microscopes, and all the Leyden jars, and all the electric batteries, and all the observatories, and all the universities shall bow to Jesus. It is much that way already. Where is the college that does not have morning prayers, thus bowing at the manger? Who have been the greatest physicians? Omitting the names of the living lest we should be invidious, have we not had among them Christian men like James Y. Simpson and Rush and Valentine Mott and Abercrombie and Abernethy? Who have been our greatest scientists? Joseph Henry, who lived and died in the faith of the gospels, and Agassiz, who, standing with his students among the hills, took off his hat and said, "Young gentlemen, before we study these rocks let us pray for wisdom to the God who made the rocks." All geology will yet bow before the Rock of Ages. All botany will yet worship the Rose of Sharon. All astronomy will yet recognize the Star of Bethlehem.

Behold, also, in that first Christmas [night] that God honored the fields. Come [ye] shepherd boys, to Bethlehem and see the child. "No!" they say; "we are not dressed good enough to come in." "Yes, you are; come in." Sure enough, the storms and the night dew and the brambles have made rough work with their apparel, but none has a better right to come in. They were the first to hear the music of that Christmas night. The first announcement of a Saviour's birth was made to those men in the fields. There were wiseacres that night in Bethlehem and Jerusalem snoring in deep sleep, and there were salaried officers of government who, hearing of it afterward, may have thought that they ought to have had the first news of such a great event, some one dismounting from a swift camel at their door and knocking till at some sentinel's question, "Who comes there?" the great ones of the palace might have been told of the celestial arrival. No; the shepherds heard the first two bars of the music, the first in the major key and the last in the subdued minor, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will to men!" Ah, yes, the fields were honored!

The old shepherds with plaid and crook have for the most part vanished, but we have grazing on our United States pasture fields and prairie about 42,000,000 sheep, and all their keepers ought to follow the shepherds of my text, and all those who toil in fields, all vine dressers, all orchardists, all husbandmen. Not only that Christmas night, but all up and down the world's history God has been honoring the fields. Nearly all the messiahs of reform and literature and eloquence and law and benevolence have come from the fields. Washington from the fields. Jefferson from the fields. The Presidential martyrs, Garfield and Lincoln and McKinley, from the fields. Daniel Webster from the fields. Martin Luther from the fields. Before this world is right the overflowing populations of our crowded cities will have to take to the fields. Instead of ten merchants in rivalry as to who shall sell that one apple we want at least eight of them to go out and raise apples. Instead of ten merchants desiring to sell that one bushel of wheat, we want at least eight of them to go out and raise wheat. The world wants now more hard hands, more bronzed cheeks, more muscular arms. To the fields! God honored them when He woke up the shepherds by the midnight anthem, and He will, while the world lasts, continue to honor the fields. When the shepherd's crook was that famous night stood against the wall of the Bethlehem khan, it was a prophecy of the time when thrasher's flail and farmer's plow and woodman's axe and ox's yoke and sheaf binder's rake shall surrender to the God who made the country, as man made the town.

Behold, also, that on that Christmas night God honored motherhood. Two angels on their wings might have brought an infant Saviour to Bethlehem without Mary's being there at all. When the villagers on the morning of December 26 awoke, by divine arrangement and in some unexplained way the child Jesus might have been found in some comfortable cradle of the village. But no, no! Motherhood for all time was to be consecrated, and one of the tenderest relations was to be the maternal relation and one of the sweetest words, "mother." In all ages God has honored good motherhood. John Wesley had a good mother; St. Bernard had a good mother; Doddridge, a good mother; Walter Scott, a good mother; Benjamin West, a good mother. In a great audience, most of whom were Christians, I asked that all those who had been blessed of Christian mothers arise, and almost the entire assembly stood up. Do you not see how important it is that all motherhood be consecrated? Why did Titian, the Italian artist, when he sketched the Madonna make it an Italian face? Why did Rubens, the German artist, in his Madonna make it a German face? Why did Joshua Reynolds, the English artist, in his Madonna make it an English face? Why did Murillo, the Spanish artist, in his Madonna make it a Spanish face? I never heard, but I think they took their own mothers as the type of Mary, the mother of Christ. When you hear some one in sermon or oration speak in the abstract of a good, faithful, honest mother, your eyes fill up with tears while you say to yourself, "That was my mother."

The first word a child utters is apt to be "mother," and the old man in his dying dream calls: "Mother! Mother!" It matters not whether she was brought up in the surroundings of a city and in affluent home, and was dressed appropriately with reference to the demands of modern life or whether she wore the old-time cap and great, round spectacles and apron of her own make and knit your socks with her own needles seated by the broad fireplace, with great backlog ablaze, on a winter night. It matters not how many wrinkles crossed and recrossed her face or how much her shoulders stooped with the burdens of a long life. If you painted a Madonna, hers would be the face. What a gentle hand she had when we were sick, and what a voice to soothe pain, and was there any one who could so fill up a room with peace and purity and light? And what a sad day that was when we came home and she could greet us not, for her lips were forever still! Come back, mother, in these Christmas times and take your old place, and, as ten or twenty or fifty years ago, come and open the old Bible as you used to; read and kneel in the same place where you used to pray and look upon us, as of old, when you wished us a merry Christmas or a happy New Year! But, no! That would not be fair to call you back. You had troubles enough while you were here. Tarry by the throne, mother, till we join you there, your prayers all answered, and in the eternal homestead of our God we shall again keep Christmas jubilee together. But speak from your thrones, all you glorified mothers, and say to all these, your sons and daughters, words of love, words of warning, words of cheer. They need your voice, for they have traveled far and with many a heartbreak since you left them, and you do well to call from the heights of heaven to the valleys of earth. Hail, enthroned ancestry! We are coming! Keep a place right beside you at the banquet!

"Slow footed years! More swiftly run
Into the gold of that setting sun.
Homesick we are for thee,
Calm land beyond the sea."

Obligations of Good Will.

Just because it is so pleasant to receive courtesy and favor and service, it is one's duty to be thoroughly appreciative that he shall not allow himself to impose upon those whose delight is in generous and delicate ministries to his comfort and joy. To give of one's self is right, and the genuine, loving giver often fails to put any estimate upon his gift, and is satisfied in its bestowal. But he that receives even the slightest evidence of love and good will is under obligation to esteem it and keep it in mind. It is ingratitude to receive without acknowledgment, and to take for granted any service rendered. It makes one selfish and unworthy, and more than often wounds the loving heart whose life spends itself for others. No one would really enjoy the reputation of selfishness, ingratitude, meanness, that such conduct deserves. No one need have it if he studies to be thoughtful and thankful, and more ready to give than to receive.—Universalist Leader.

Indecision.

Indecision is many a man's ruin. This is true spiritually as well as temporally. The soul's safety demands prompt action. Favorable opportunities for salvation must be seized at once. Gracious calls are to be heeded without delay. When the Spirit is working in a human heart it is a risky and fearful thing to say, "Go thy way for this time; at a more convenient season I will call for thee." The wise will immediately fall into line with his motions, and accept the Saviour whom He tenders, and live as He directs. "Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation." Close in with the overtures of mercy. Run no risks. Time presses. Eternity is near. The judgment is at hand. It may be now or never with you.—Presbyterian.

Fit Companions.

The scientist, more anxious to vindicate his theory than to discover the secrets of nature, is a fit companion to the believer who is more concerned in defending his creed than in learning the will of God.—Rev. L. Walter Mason, Unitarian, Pittsburg.

THE GREAT DESTROYE[R]

SOME STARTLING FACTS ABOU[T] THE VICE OF INTEMPERANCE

Poem: Indifference—It is a Duty to Pr[otect] Your Neighbor's Child as Well as [Your] Own—A Rude Sobering Machine Did Wonders For Temperance.

If I and mine are safe at home,
It matters not if wolves go by,
Nor that my neighbor's children roam,
Nor that I hear them loudly cry,
Pleading for help.

If mine are safe and undefiled,
It matters not what woe betide,
Nor who beguiled my neighbor's child,
Nor that by ruthless hand it dies,
Calling for help.

Alas, my child has climbed the wall,
Is out among the wolves so fierce,
(I dreamed no harm could him befall),
But now their fangs his flesh will pierc[e]
Oh, God, send help.

Think not the Lord will spare thy child,
If thou hast seen the wolves go by,
Nor warned thy neighbor's son beguiled,
To pitfalls where he sure must die,
For want of help.

Or here or there the Lord will mete,
To thee the measure of thy deeds,
Works make the prayer of faith complete,
Helping thy neighbor in his needs,
And pleasing God.

—A. H. U., in the National Advocate.

The Sobering Machine.

The "Tattler" recently met a quaint and amusing old gentleman, who said: "A portion of my life was spent in a sleepy Pennsylvania town, which has grown little in the course of a half a century, and still preserves many of the quaint customs of its earliest days. You will find in this idyllic retreat counterparts of all the celebrities who figure so delightfully in Miss Mitford's 'Our Village.' In my boyhood it had an institution which distinguished it from all sister villages—an institution quite unknown to modern communities. It was called the sobering machine. This consisted of a rude, springless two-wheeled vehicle, with a board body, drawn by a motley assembly of bummers and roysterers, old and young, who can always be summoned in a country place on the slightest signal when anything exciting is in the wind. When one of the rather numerous town drunkards was discovered in a favorable position, the sobering machine was slyly backed up to the curb, the victim was quickly pushed into the cart and then pulled through the streets over every possible obstacle by the jeering mob that manned the ropes. The victim, it was assumed, was jolted, jerked and thumped into semi-sobriety by this rough riding. At any rate, few of the town loafers who had tested the tonic virtues of the sobering machine yearned for a second dose. Many of the noisy, ragged crowd who helped to drag the sobering machine over its devious route had themselves taken similar trips.

"The rude apparatus, I suspect," continued the old gentleman, according to the Philadelphia Ledger, "did more for the cause of temperance in its day than the more gentle and respectable methods of promoting the reform. The appliance was carefully housed and all the bloods in town knew where it was to be found. Sometimes it figured in parades, and, when bedecked and bedizened with flowers, flags and ribbons, it attracted almost as much notice as the little, sputtering hand engine, which was supposed to do duty on haystack fires."

The Serpent in the Cup.

I was never more impressed with the terrible nature of the serpent which lies coiled in the cup than in learning the following story. A Christian physician had told a lady a sad story of woman's degradation, and in closing said: "But I can show you something vastly worse." He took her to one of the hospital wards and brought her to a little crib, where, bound head and foot, that it might not dash itself to pieces, lay a babe of seventeen months of age in the agonies of delirium tremens. After reaching home this lady dare not tell the story until in black and white the facts were before her. So she wrote to the doctor (who gives so much of his time and strength to the benevolent institutions of a certain city). She received from an inmate of his dwelling this reply: "It is not an uncommon thing for children, from one year and upward, to be brought to this hospital in delirium tremens. Mothers begin to give their children intoxicating drinks at a very early age, which they increase, as the desire to go out for debauch or work, and so the little ones come to the hospital in this condition. The babe of whom you ask has probably lost its sight, but not its hearing, and the passion is ruling in death, for it opens its mouth to receive the alcoholic stimulant, as the bird in the nest to receive the food from its mother."—Brethren Evangelist.

What is in a Glass of Beer?

A writer in a German newspaper, says the Pharmaceutical Record, has had the temerity to jot down the ingredients which go to make up a glass of beer in Germany. The pharmacopeia of the beer barrel this scientific man sets forth in alphabetical order. We give the German nomenclature for fear of spoiling the brew. "It consists," says the writer, "of alcohol, althopfenol, aloe, belladonna, biercouleur, bilsenkraut, bitterklee, buchenspane, caraghenmoos, coloquinten, enzian, fichtennoneln, gogel, gelatine, glycerine, haselnuszspane, housenblase, herbstzeitlose, hopfenaroma, hophenbittersaure, Ignatinsbohne, ingwer, kamille, kartoffelzucher, kardobendictenkraut, kokelskorner, koriander, lakriezensaft, laugensalz, malzextract, mettallsalze, mohn, moussirpulver, natron, pieszwurz, nux vomica, pikrinsaure, pottasche, quassia, reis salicysaure, schafgarbe, Spanischer, pfeffer, soda, strakezucker, starkemehl, strychnin, syrup, tannin, tausendguldenkraut, tischlerleim, wachholder, waldmeister, weidenschalen, wermuth, zuckercoulor, etc."

Well, the Germans can put all these articles into a glass of beer, but they cannot put the beer into my stomach when it is brewed. To stand such a dose a man should have a stomach copper bottomed and porcelain lined. Down with the beer business!

How the Law is Enforced.

Recently some druggists and hotel men of Burlington, Vt., were taught the lesson which many such violators of the law in other places need to learn. They were fined from $100 to $750 each and sentenced to imprisonment for six months for violation of prohibitory laws. In Kansas a Topeka jointist was fined $7500, sentenced to 1350 days in jail and placed under bond of $10,000 for violation of prohibitory law. A few instances like this would have a salutary effect on many would-be liquor sellers.—Baptist Argus.

The Crusade in Brief.

Seventy of the ninety-six counties of the State are now dry.

One hundred cases of liquor, confiscated from "blind tigers," was destroyed by order of the court at Newport, Ark.

John Cahill, of Evanston, Ill., has been fined $300 for keeping a "blind pig." The fine is the heaviest ever imposed for a like offense.

Saloonists are objecting to the extension of the rural free delivery system. Taking the farmer's mail to his door daily obviates the necessity of his coming to town so often and hence, of course, "enjoying the privilege" of visiting the booze dispensary.

The Methodist Ministers' Association of Denver, Col., has appointed a committee to petition the City Council to pass an ordinance which will put restaurants that sell liquor under the same restrictions as saloons.

The postal director in the city of Doubs, France, has issued an order forbidding all letter carriers accepting alcoholic drinks from their customers while on and off duty. He says the importance of the service demands total abstinence.

Why untrue statements in regard to alcohol cannot be discovered and disproved as quickly as any other errors, and why the truth of this drug should not be welcomed and accepted with as much confidence as any other statement, are psychological mysteries.

m... r... st... str... pa... for... mil... John... rush... "as o... sound... room... room, ... no bur...

3. "... ble sig... "Clove[n]... parted... one sou[nd]... root, a... them. ... which Jo[hn]... the fire... longed to... The fire... power of... symbol of ... ing, triumph... The resistless ... the errors and burn[s]... comfort, warmth, cheer, ... which the Holy Spirit cou[ld]... sat." There were as many ... were persons, and they sat up... some time to show the constan[cy]... of the Holy Spirit with them.

4. "Filled." Were entirely un[der]... sacred influence and power. To be... with anything is a phrase denoting t[hat]... the faculties are pervaded by it, en... in it, or under its influence. "Wit[h the] Holy Ghost." At this time their he[arts] were purified by faith and they were [en]dued with miraculous powers for the furtherance of the gospel. "Other tongues." In other languages which they had not known before this time. "Utterance." Furnished them with the matter as well as the language.

5. "Dwelling." Both residents and visitors. "Devout." Truly religious. "Every nation." "The Jews at that time were scattered into almost all nations, and in all places had synagogues."

6. "When this sound was heard" (R. V.) The sound that came from the upper room. "Confounded." Perplexed, failing to understand what it all meant. See v. 12. "Own language." Or dialect; they heard even the different dialects. See v. 8.

7. "Galileans." Persons wholly uneducated and conesquently ignorant of those languages which they now speak so fluently.

9. "Parthians." For an explanation of the names in this and the following verses see dictionary.

10. "Proselytes." Heathen who had accepted the Jewish religion.

11. "Wonderful works." Concerning Jesus, His death, resurrection and ascension, and His power to save men from sin.

12. "Amazed." In great perplexity. "What meaneth this?" They could not understand what they saw.

13. "Others mocking." The word rendered mocking means to cavil, to deride. There has seldom been a remarkable manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit that has not given occasion for profane mockery and merriment. The Saviour Himself was mocked, and the efforts of Christians to save others have been the subject of derision. "New wine." Sweet wine.

14. "Peter—said." Peter's sermon was clear and practical. It was founded on facts, and was endorsed by the Holy Spirit. "Harken." Important truth is about to be spoken.

15. "Not drunken." We have not even been taking sweet wine. "Third hour." It is only 9 o'clock in the morning, too early to be affected with strong drink. This was also the hour of morning worship, and devout Jews were not accustomed to take food or drink before that time; even drunkards did not usually become drunk in the daytime.

16. "This is that." This is a fulfilment of the predictions of one of your own prophets. "Joel." See Joel 2: 28-32. Peter gives the sense, but does not quote the exact words.

17. "The last days." This expression always denotes in the New Testament the age of the Messiah, which the Scriptures represent as the world's last great moral epoch. The Christian dispensation. "Pour out." Not in drops as under the old covenant, but in streams which He shed on us abundantly. "All flesh." All races, ranks and classes. "Prophesy." This word denotes in general, to speak under a divine influence, whether in foretelling future events, in celebrating the praises of God, or in instructing others in the duties of religion. See Paul's definition in 1 Cor. 14: 3. "Visions—dreams." These were some of the ways God chose to reveal Himself, more especially under the old covenant.

18. "Servants—handmaidens." Formerly there were schools of prophets, but now the Spirit was to be poured out upon persons of inferior rank, for the kingdom of the Messiah is to be purely spiritual.

19. "I will show." There are a great variety of opinions as to the meaning of verses 19 and 20. "The sun," etc. These are figurative representations of eclipses, intended, most probably, to point out the fall of the civil and ecclesiastical state in Judea.

20. "Day of the Lord." This will apply to any day in which God manifests Himself, but particularly to a day when He comes forth to punish men as at the destruction of Jerusalem, or at the day of judgment. These wonders were to take place before God was to come forth in judgment.

Revising the British Anthem.

The British national anthem is now undergoing revision in order to make it accord with the new monarchy. As at present sung it read, "God save our gracious King." This apparently is not imperialistic enough for the present court, besides which the word "gracious" is held to be more applicable to a queen than a king. So at the coronation the refrain will be changed to "God save our lord the King," which, by the way, was used in the earliest extant copies of the anthem, dated 1743.

Valuable Find of Relics.

A valuable find of ancient treasure is reported from Montalto in Liguria, Italy. During the demolition of one of the most ancient churches in Italy a small underground chamber was discovered filled with objects of art dating back to the era of the Roman Empire. They consisted chiefly of silver amphorae and vases finely chiseled and filed with gold and silver coins of the Roman Empire.

American Shoes Invade Austria.

It is officially announced at Vienna that owing to the fact that American shoes are invading the Austrian market the Ministry of Commerce has bought a number of the latest American shoemaking machines, and will shortly institute a series of lectures and demonstrations for the benefit of the Austrian shoe manufacturers and operatives.

American Capitalists in Iceland.

American capitalists may buy or lease pyritiferous lands in Iceland.